DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 471 013 SP 041 222

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TITLE	Transforming Teacher Preparation Programs for the Diverse Classroom in Public and Private Urban, Suburban, and Rural School Settings.
PUB DATE	2002-02-00
NOTE	25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (54th, New York, NY, February 23-26, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Cultural Awareness; *Disabilities; *Diversity (Student); Educational Change; Educational Legislation; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; Special Education; Student Teachers; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Competencies; Teaching Skills
IDENTIFIERS	Bellarmine College KY; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

ABSTRACT

This paper explores what is moving the preservice teacher education field to a higher professional and ethical standard, examining: how the field of education has addressed the need for improved performance in serving students with disabilities over the past 20 years; what level of innovation is needed to sustain change for a single service delivery system; and how teacher education units of colleges and universities are responding to the need for better trained teachers for today's classrooms. Overall, bachelor's level teachers receive at least some exposure to serving students with diverse needs, but they only receive minimal exposure to issues related these students, and in essence they are not required to master the skills for serving all students. The paper describes one university's response to this issue, highlighting five essential elements of the certification program: expertise in national and state standards for content areas, with firm understanding of how to translate the standards into practical and effective daily instruction; skill and knowledge in identifying, assessing, and planning instruction for typical and atypical child development; experience and skill in working with diverse learners; mastering the use of multidimensional instruction and assessment; and applying knowledge of federal and state laws governing services for all students. (Contains 28 references.) (SM)

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ED 471 013

Symposium

Transforming Teacher Preparation Programs for the Diverse Classroom
in Public and Private Urban, Suburban, and Rural School Settings

Diverse Certification: A Professional and Ethical Requirement for the New Millennium

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2002 AACTE Annual Meeting
New York, NY
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First, let it be understood that my dream is of a world in which I never have to write or speak the words *general education* and *special education* again to indicate a separate set of ideals and practices for teaching any child. Second, I dream of a world where every teacher knows how to serve every child and does so because *they believe in their heart that it is the right thing to do*, not the legal requirement. Third, I vision a world where everyone has *skills and abilities that uplift and promote*, in which no one has labels that define or demean - not teachers, not students, not parents. Fourth, I hope for a world where the *integrity, aptitude, and capacity* of each child and teacher is measured by their *performance in real time* instead of any single test score. Fifth, I ache for the day when we stand hand in hand feeling the electricity of life when "All Children Can Learn" *MEANS that each child does*. Finally, I pray that my journey, as long as it has been, will reach these dreams beginning in one small way, through Bellarmine's program.

The vocation of Education is awash with cries for reformed practices that fall short of professionalism and ethical responses to serving ***all*** children. A professional and ethical response to serving all children would require deep rooted changes to the foundation of the profession - pre service teacher education. This paper explores what is happening and not happening in the pre service teacher education field that is moving the vocation to a higher professional and ethical standard. Research questions for this paper include: Over the past twenty six years, how has the field of education, as a learning organization, addressed the need for improved performance in serving students with disabilities? What level of innovation should be occurring to sustain change for a single service delivery system? How are the teacher education units of colleges and universities responding to the need for teachers to be better trained for today's classroom?

According to Senge in *The Dance of Change* (1999) approximately two thirds of major change initiatives fail because they do not produce the desired end results. During the 1990s, Arthur D. Little and McKinsey & Company, in two independent studies, found that nearly sixty-six percent of management programs fail because they do not produce desired results. Kotter (1995), in a Harvard study of one hundred major change initiatives, concluded that more than fifty percent of organizational change endeavors never made it past the first level of change. The failure to sustain long term changes occurs in spite of substantial capital committed to the change. Senge theorizes that the shift in practices of learning organizations fails because the organizations do not address the deeper limiting processes that delay or stop progress.

Change initiatives that address considerable shifts in practice and products inevitably face problems that are embedded in the system of the organization. The failure to sustain long term change evolves from the inability or choice to ignore the deeper issues of the organization that keep it from improving. Senge argues that the most basic error in most change initiatives is the tendency to focus on the innovation instead of on the reaction of the larger culture, structure, and norms of the institution. He identifies ten challenges of initiating change which fall in to three categories: initiating, sustaining, and redesigning and rethinking. Most change initiatives do not make it past the initiating stage because the forces pushing against the innovation are stronger than the innovation itself.

Innovation for a learning organization is an attempt to improve the quality of its mission and the performance of its product. Senge suggests that in a true learning organization, the movement toward sustained change is actually a dance of natural proportions in which there is creative tension between the attempt to move forward and the forces that inhibit movement. The successful learning organization is capable of finding the rhythm of creating innovation by addressing those deep rooted

issues of organizational culture, structure, and practice. The inability of an organization to shift the forces pushing against the innovation, those deeper underlying aspects of the culture, structures, and practices of the organization, causes failure of the innovation itself. It is as if the two dance partners can not find the right rhythm of moving ahead while keeping staying in step with the overall system of the organization.

Over the past twenty six years, how has the field of education, as a learning organization, addressed the need for improved performance in serving students with disabilities?

The dance of change is clearly evident in the field of education as national trends push the use of standards to "teach the basics" and ensure that all students are ready for a world that is anything but "basic". There is no doubt that the field of education has filled many ballrooms with pedagogical, theoretical, and practical dances of change. Perhaps the greatest dance of change has been in the struggle to implement Public Law 94-142, the law commonly known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The initial, and perhaps naive intention of this law was to provide all students the equal opportunity to learn, grow, and participate in the public education system so that they might live as full a life as possible. After thirty years of implementation, the cadence of this dance is still arrhythmic, complete with unnatural stops and gaps, hesitations, missteps, and in many cases turned ankles and broken legs.

Rivaled perhaps only by the emotional intensity of implementing Brown v. Board of Education (1954) the IDEA pushed the greatest single change initiative in educational practices in the history of education in the United States (Lipton, 1994). Prior to its enactment, less than five percent of the school age children identified as having disabilities were being educated, with many states employing specific laws that excluded students who were "feeble minded", deaf, blind, or disturbed from a public education. (Wientraub, Abeson, & Braddock, 1971). The IDEA called for the full scale provision for all school age children, regardless of their disability, a free and appropriate public education, requiring boards of education, local schools boards, administrators, teachers, parents and the community at large to face the music of a new service delivery dance.

The initial push of IDEA was to establish equal opportunities for participation in the public school system for students with disabilities. During this phase of the dance, national and local governments, federal and state courts, parents, and school systems struggled to define what was considered "equal" for children with disabilities in comparison to their non disabled peers. As the government attempted to define "equal" through financial systems and courts began to define "equality" for students with disabilities from a legal stand point, the schools attempted, in varying degrees to implement some form of "service" to provide that equality. As Senge suggests with learning organizations, this is the first place Education as an institution failed to face the deep systemic questions that would have created a symbiotic, fluid dance of education for all children. Instead of facing the complex and conflictive issues of serving students with disabilities as natural entities of one education system, a separate educational system emerged for students with disabilities which neither equated, nor mirrored the quality of a typical education system.

Research, common sense, and an increasingly formidable fiscal commitment over the past three decades has challenged the practicality and long range effectiveness of a dual education system. There is consistent evidence that the dual system has not been beneficial to the students with disabilities, nor the non disabled students. (Bickel & Bickel, 1986; Lipsky & Gartner, 1994; Lipsky

& Gartner, 1997; Lipton, 1994; Lupart, McKeough, & Yewchuck, 1995; National Council on Disability, 1989; Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1986). An argument can be made that the dual system created not a symbiotic and fluid dance, but a riot of burdensome legal, financial, emotional, and organizational requirements outweighed only by the paperwork necessary to document the fiasco.

When the IDEA was reauthorized in 1997 and 2000 Congress attempted to improve the coordination of general and special education services for students in a variety of ways including strengthening the role of parents, requiring access to the general curriculum, focusing more on teaching and learning and less on paperwork, supporting local education agencies in financial issues, and encouraging schools and parents to work out their differences in non adversarial ways. While the intent of the changes to the law are not without merit, this is at least the second time during a pivotal turning point, that education, as a learning organization, missed the opportunity to create and sustain real change by avoiding the deeper issues of the culture, structures, and procedures of the dual systems. Instead of mandating a unified system in which all teachers were held accountable for the success of all children, focus remained on surface fixes for deep rooted problems.

The focus of the reauthorization of IDEA pointed toward better coordination between general and special education through the mandate for students with disabilities to have access to the general education curriculum. While the general intent of this change was to ensure that students had better opportunities to learn what their peers were learning and to perform better on the national standards, the outcome will undoubtedly be long in coming, if it happens to a high degree at all. Students identified as having disabilities have nearly double the drop out rate as non disabled students. Students with disabilities continue to have lower graduation rates and lower participation in post secondary education than non disabled peers (NCERI, 1994). Based on Senge's theories in *The Dance of Change* it is evident that the deeper issues that currently push against the access to the general education curriculum were not addressed - teacher capacity to build access to the curriculum for all children and skills for the coordinated efforts to serve diverse children in a collaborative manner (Baker, Wang & Walberg, 1995; Cates & Yell, 1994; Moll, 1996; Parish & Verstegen, 1994; Schwartz, Hidalgo, & Hays, 1991).

Yet another "national initiative" appears to be missing the mark. In the Executive Summary of the No Child Left Behind: Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (2002) federal emphasis is being placed on priorities that will only hit the surface level if past history repeats itself. For example, the so called "blueprint" for education includes four general priorities and seven performance based outcomes. The four priorities are increased accountability for student performance, research based practices, decreased bureaucracy and increased local flexibility, and parental empowerment. Each priority, left unearthed, points to the continuation of the same inconsistent and inadequate implementation.

For example, consider the typical response to "achievement will be rewarded and failure will be sanctioned" when national test scores do not meet minimum standards. The higher the pressure to score well on a single national test, the greater the likelihood that schools will move to only teach the test, not improve the quality of the teaching. Holding schools accountable for student performance is not without merit. However, focusing only on nationally standardized or state standardized test scores as the only measurement of success is a minimalist view of educational change, when the quality of teachers and their ability to teach diverse students is at the root of successful schools. Changing the surface of education - test scores - does not automatically equate with changing the

underlying reasons students are not performing - the culture, structures, and procedures within the schools.

There is always a significant call during reform for an increase in funding. In a NASDE News brief (2001), the National Association of State Directors of Special Education deputy director Nancy Reder suggested states primarily need more money to do a better job implementing special education. In a recent interview (2001), Judith Heumann, former director of the federal level office of special education, also suggested additional funding is necessary for improved special education funding. While funding is always critical to an organization, money is not the prime root of the problem. The infusion of money has been consistent throughout the decades, but has not resulted in complete and competent improvement. For example, there has been more than a 400 percent increase in federal expenditures to support special education services since 1975, yet results are still mixed and unsatisfactory (Baker, Wang & Walberg, 1995, Lipsky & Gartner, 1994).

The President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education may likely be another example of misdirection if the commission studies only the surface level of the challenges they have been given. A few of those challenges include examining research on the cost and effectiveness of special education, identifying new research for special education, analyzing the effect of funding on placement decisions, determining if state and federal requirements impede progress, and developing methods to recruit and retain teachers of special education.

The misdirection of recent mandates suggests that we are continuing to try and fix old problems without attending to the obvious, but "unmentionable" roots of those problems. We can add as much money as the coffers could handle and research issues until there was no more data to be collected, but unless something deeper is changed - those cultures, structures, and procedures for educating students, the world will remain the same. We have, in essence, filled our dance card with the wrong partners to sustain change.

For those of us who have been in the education field, particularly those with special education as their primary focus, these "challenges" are nothing more than a political Tango to the same old tune. There are plenty of studies on the effectiveness and cost of special education and funding's impact on placement decisions. We know that there has been considerable duplication of services within the dual service delivery systems. (Lipsky & Gartner, 1990, 1994, 1997; Lombardi, 1999; Lupart, McKeough & Yewchuck, 1995; Stainback & Stainback, 1990). Duplication of services equates with excessive use of funds. Placement decisions for students with disabilities and the disproportion of nonwhite children identified as disabled screams of problems in the system much deeper than the issue of funding. Research by Oswald, Best and Coutinho (2001) and d'Oliveira (2001) suggests that teacher and community perceptions of gender, ethnicity, school expectations, and sociodemographic factors all contribute to overrepresentation of minority children in special education. Will federal research focus on the deep rooted issues of teacher training - before they come in to the system - including perceptions, practices and prejudices? Or will it be the same old dance to the same old tune - "We'll give you more money if you stay where you are."?

While the challenge of researching ways to recruit and retain special education personnel seems close to the lowest common denominator that persists in ninety percent of educational issues, it still misses the mark. There is more than enough research on how to recruit and retain special education personnel. The biggest reasons teachers leave special education? Paperwork, lack of support, disconnectedness from the general education environment, and the litigious nature of the

profession are among the top issues reported by teachers (Bernhardt & Jensen, 1993; Bowen, 1992; Davis, 1991; Mayhew & Welch, 2001; Mullins, Morris & Rienochl, 1997; Ryder, 1986; Schnorr & Brady, 1994; Whitaker, 2001; Whitworth, 1993, 2000). What is at the root of these problems?

Paperwork, in all its formats is meant to document the rights and provisions of serving a student with disabilities. Where has the paperwork come from, particularly the paperwork teachers are required to complete? Most required paperwork can be traced back to issues related to teachers, administrators, and parents either not knowing what and how to serve students with disabilities or not agreeing on the process.

Why the lack of support? Administrators and general education teachers often do not really know what special education is supposed to be about nor how to incorporate special education into the general education world because they have very limited knowledge or background in the area (Moll, 1996). For example, most general education teachers are required to have one college level course on special education issues. How does one course prepare any teacher for the challenge and responsibility of serving the wide range of diversities in a general education classroom?

Why are special education teachers disconnected from the general education environment? This is a three pronged problem but all prongs originate around a lack of consistent and common knowledge on what special education services are supposed to accomplish. For decades administrators were told that special education was supposed to be separate both financially and physically. General education teachers were taught special education was a place, not a service. Special education teachers were taught that special education was separate in curriculum, practices, and outcomes and thus created and participated in a separate school culture (e.g., separate professional development activities, schedules, meetings).

Why the litigious nature of special education? In a review conducted of 100 of the most recent court cases cited in Special Education Law Monthly, two thirds of the cases centered around potential breeches in policies and procedures related to evaluation, identification, and/or implementation of instructional services for students with disabilities within general education settings (Moll, 2002 unpublished). Who were the major players in these cases other than parents and students? Administrators and teachers. Nearly fifty percent of those court cases involved a direct connection to services by teachers within a general education context. One has to wonder if teachers were better prepared before they enter the classroom to fully understand the purpose and legal base for special education if much of the litigation would decrease significantly.

One can deduct that Education, as a learning organization, has attempted to implement innovations for creating better services for students with disabilities in public schools. Those innovations, in varying degrees have changed the face of the educational system. However, the overall impact of those innovations for creating a system that provides equal opportunities for all children has been elusive. The dual system that persists, in spite of fiscal support, increased paperwork, court decisions, and research initiatives is still inadequate and inappropriate if we believe that all children not only have a right to be educated, but have the right to be successful. It is time time to dig deeper and face the new music of change, where school cultures, structures, and procedures are formed - the pre service dance floor.

What level of innovation should be occurring to sustain change for a single service delivery system?

Like the sombrero in the Mexican Hat Dance, this paper suggests that friends and foes of education have danced all around one of the deepest issues that prevents significant change in education - teacher preparation. Today's classroom comes completely equipped with children from diverse cultural backgrounds, different socioeconomic lifestyles, multiple learning styles, and a wide range of capabilities. Teachers in general, do not come out of their preparation programs with the tools for this real world classroom if they have one class and "strands" on diversity. We must change the way we train teachers before they ever step foot into classrooms.

The Root of the Problem - Mosh[1] Pit v. Ballroom Dancing

The greatest single source for change available to education today is not finances, court cases, or the social atmosphere of the country. It is pre service teacher preparation. It is very clear that every classroom, from the inner city of Harlem to the rural Appalachian burg of Monkey's Eyebrow and the Oregon coastal city of Newport, has a mixture of children who bring different cultures, beliefs, priorities, learning styles, and capabilities with them on their quest to learn. This is true in the poorest elementary school and the richest private academy. No classroom is exempt from diverse learners. No teacher can escape the responsibility of recognizing and responding to individual learning differences.

What is not clear, is why educators are not *required* to learn and apply the skills and processes necessary to address this diversity. Teacher licensure remains one of the most loosely held tenets of education, and given the atmosphere of panic over teacher shortages, risks becoming even more fluid and inadequate. Teachers are allowed to receive initial certification without a broad base of skills to address diversity because individual states hold the power of deciding what and how much is enough training. The amount of teacher preparation and requirements for each licensure varies greatly from one state to another.

It is important to note that State level teacher preparation requirements, even with significant flexibility, are not without guidelines and standards. One could argue in fact that there is a plethora of national standards that guide teacher preparation. At least nineteen sets of nationally approved content oriented standards outline what teachers should know and be able to do in *separate* content based categories. For example, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) outlines what skills and knowledge teachers who are certified in Computing and Technology Education should know and be able to do. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provides specifics for teachers of Early Childhood Education. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) all outline the skills and knowledge of those who teach content specific courses. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), and Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESOL) specify the skills and knowledge teachers need to work with different "categories" of students. All of these national standards hint at the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with diverse learners, but remain, and separate and categorically driven.

At least two major national players in the field of education directly associated with teacher preparation outline teacher preparation skills from a broader perspective than the more content

[1] Mosh pit is a style of dancing where individuals crowd together, jump, gyrate, spin, fly against each other in individual rhythms with no regard to the tune or the step of those beside them.

specific national associations. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) suggest that teachers need a wide variety of skills and knowledge to be proficient in the profession. These two sets of standards promote teacher skills that span the chasm between separate teaching areas.

The NCATE sets standards for certification of teacher education programs at colleges and universities. These standards of preparation are based on the various national associations for specific teaching areas and research on successful teacher preparation. These standards are clear and explicit and align with the core components of the NBPTS, but do not require each content area certification (e.g., math, science) to contain all of the skills and knowledge needed for today's diverse classroom.

The NBPTS provides five core propositions on what teachers should know and be able to do. The first proposition requires that teachers recognize individual differences in student learning and adjust their practice accordingly, understand how students develop and learn, treat students equitably, and develop the cognitive capacity of students. Proposition two requires that teachers know the subjects they are required to teach and generate multiple paths for students to reach that knowledge. The third proposition requires teachers to use multiple methods to collect, manage, monitor, and apply assessment information for student learning. Proposition four requires teachers to develop and exemplify virtues they expect in students including tolerance, respect for diversity and appreciation for cultural differences. The fifth and final proposition seeks to develop teachers who are life long learners working collaboratively with other professionals, parents and the community.

A close look at these core propositions shows that they contain the skills and knowledge necessary for teachers to effectively teach in diverse classrooms from the self contained special education room to the typical general education room. The propositions address the diverse needs of learners with disabilities, english as a second language, significant gifts and talents, "non mainstream" cultures, socially and economically disadvantaged lives as well as focus on the "typical" learner and content specific adeptness.

Coupling the standards from the NCATE and the NBPTS, embeds the skills and knowledge teachers need to address the diversity of today's classrooms. However, neither of these sets of national standards are *holistically required* by state or federal laws. Each state, has at its discretion the ability to decide whether to hand out a teaching license to any graduate of a teacher preparation program with or without NCATE certification. Each state has at its discretion the decision to require teachers to achieve National Board Certification by NBPTS during their teaching career. (Currently there are only 16, 037 teachers certified in the United States.) In addition, even if states were required to only use NCATE accredited institutions, teachers would still be allowed to receive separate and arguably incomplete certifications.

Hence the dance continues. National standards are developed, approved, and adopted. Plenty of partners on the dance floor. However, there is yet to be a consistent coordination at a national level to solidify the requirement and implementation of such standards. What would make sense is for federal, state, and local agencies to require that all teachers come to the classroom ready to serve the wide range of students present. What would make sense is for national organizations, state teacher certification boards, colleges and universities, and K - 12 schools to stop jumping up and down, gyrating, and bouncing around teacher certification in a mosh pit of choices and step together

in time and tune with each other on the ballroom floor by requiring certification of its teachers that embodies the diversity of today's classroom.

How are the teacher education units of colleges and universities responding to the need for teachers to be better trained for today's classroom?

To research this question, at least two colleges or universities from each of 49 states and all teacher preparation institutions in Kentucky received a brief survey on teacher preparation if that state had NCATE certified schools. The two criteria for selection were that the (1) college or university was NCATE certified and (2) electronic access was available to the college or university's teacher certification requirements and to full time faculty. NCATE certified institutions were chosen to elicit data from a set of colleges and universities that meet a common set of standards at a national level. Selection was completed for the 49 states by randomly selecting institutions from the NCATE state-by-state list of certified institutions.

Each institution was contacted via electronic mail with a brief survey asking if diverse certification (both general education and special education) was required for teachers in the undergraduate level and if not, what course(s) was required for general education teachers related to special education. The use of the diverse certification as a guide point served to identify those institutions that recognize the skills and abilities within the two programs as integral for a teacher. A web search of the teacher certification courses was conducted to deduce the content of core courses and special education courses required for general education teachers.

Findings

Fifty four out of one hundred and eight institutions responded to the electronic survey at the time this paper was written. Of those institutions replying only one requires diverse certification for elementary level, general education pre service teachers at the bachelors degree (4 year). In that institution, pre service middle and high school teachers were not required to get diverse certification.

Of the institutions that did not require diverse certification, seventy two percent of the institutions responding indicated that pre service teachers were required to take one 3 hour course related to special education. One institution required a six hour course strand on exceptionality. Twenty eight percent of the institutions indicated that strands of special education topics were interwoven into at least one general education course. Across the institutions that required one course, fifty percent also indicated that they included issues related to special education to some degree in general education courses.

An analysis of the available syllabi and objectives for the required 3 hour courses showed topics ranged from human exceptionality to characteristics of specific disabilities, with lesser emphasis on instructional issues. The primary focus in ninety percent of the courses related to the characteristics of disabilities identified by federal law (e.g., the course had at least two objectives related to characteristics). A lesser focus in eighty percent of the courses was instructional design (e.g., had only one course objective or mentioned it as a topic).

The topics which institutions indicated were included via integrated strands related to special education issues within their general education courses primarily included characteristics of diverse learners, inclusion strategies, and modifications. A review of at least one course syllabus from each institution indicating an interwoven format found that 100 percent of the syllabus highlighted the strand but only sixty percent included the topic of the strand explicitly into at least one syllabus

objective (e.g., used the same language).

Of the fifty four institutions responding, only four indicated that their pre service teachers are required to have specific, long term (e.g., more than 20 hours direct contact) interactions with special education teachers and/or students identified as disabled as part of their preparation program. Most institutions implied "contact" with students with different learning styles, but little to no intentional instructional or assessment interaction.

Based upon this limited set of data, there are several pertinent questions that should be researched further. To prepare the pre service teacher for the true diversity in classrooms, how much direct contact and interaction is actually happening with students from diverse cultures, socioeconomic, and capabilities. For the institutions indicating they embed skills and knowledge on special education into general education courses what degree of skill and knowledge are required and obtained? What level of exposure do the pre service teachers have to students with disabilities or gifts, the teachers who teach them, the paperwork involved, and the strategies that work? Are the pre service teachers required to directly teach and assess students with disabilities in classrooms or just study the topics? Are the skills necessary for teaching in today's classroom explicitly being taught at the college and university level?

Implications

The good news is that pre service, bachelor's level teachers *are* receiving at least some form of *exposure* to serving students with diverse needs. The bad news is that pre service teachers are *only receiving a minimal* exposure to issues related to these students and are in essence not required to master the skills for serving all students. The bad news is also that the minute they graduate from a program which certifies them in an elementary, middle, or high school without in-depth work in diverse populations teachers are behind in the skills they need to be successful. This lack of skill mastery puts them at risk for failure and in need of professional development. Millions of dollars from federal and state funds are dedicated each year to address this very issue.

Given the makeup of today's classroom teachers minimally need the sound grounding in content areas (e.g., science, math, reading), a cross categorical understanding of child development (e.g., beyond typical human development), a deep set of experiences with learners from diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, a firm grasp on multidimensional instruction and assessment, as well as intimate knowledge of laws and regulations that govern services for all students (e.g., IDEA, Section 504, ESL, GT). It is unclear if this is actually happening across the board in institutions of higher education.

How can the institutions of higher education tout that they prepare pre service teachers for the new millennium, ready to take charge of students, if they are not preparing them with at least minimum competency in the full set of skills required to assess, plan, and teach the full range of diverse children in today's classroom? If the federal government is going to tighten the grip on accountability and states are going to be held more accountable for the effectiveness of teachers, how can institutions of higher education ignore the need for a pre service program that requires the full set of skills a diverse certification program provides?

One University's Response to the Need

Bellarmine University, a liberal arts university in Louisville, Kentucky implemented a significant change to its teacher preparation requirements in 1998. Beginning in the fall of 1998 any student initially entering Bellarmine's undergraduate teacher preparation program was required to

enroll in a diverse certification program. Students had the choice of enrolling in an elementary (K - 5) and learning and behavior disorders program or a middle school (choice of content areas) and learning and behavior disorders program. While the general education content certifies the teacher for a specific grade level series (K-5 or 6-9) the learning and behavior disorders degree certifies the pre service teacher for serving students in K- 12. Those entering the secondary education program are currently not required to earn diverse certification, however, the School of Education is currently researching the possibility.

Background of the Required Certification

Since 1976, Bellarmine had offered students the *option* of adding the learning and behavior disorders certification to their general education certification. On average 30% of the pre service teachers earning elementary level certification chose to add the special education certification. At the middle school level around 10% of the pre service teacher population chose to add the special education certification.

While discussions for changing the certification requirements had begun some years earlier, it was not until 1997 that serious consideration was given to a required diverse certification program. Key members of the School of Education conducted informal focus groups with stake holders including pre service students, graduates of the various programs, consultants with the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board, Teacher Certification Board, principals, and local school district human resources personnel. The purpose of the focus groups was to determine the need, the desire, and the potential implications of moving to a diverse certification program.

In the spring of 1998, armed with research, results of focus group discussions, and a strong commitment to improve the teacher education program, the faculty approached the president and provost of the university to propose changes to the program. With little argument, the president and provost endorsed the development of the required diverse certification program.

Over the summer of 1998, several seasoned and new faculty members met to begin aligning the curriculum in a more suitable format to promote the required certification program. It was determined that the diverse certification program should be reflective of classrooms in public and private schools, thus a coteaching and collaborative model for implementation was outlined.

The Change Process

Moll (1996) identified five primary areas of focus to sustain organizational change within a school environment: Personal, Functional, Instructional, Structural, and Organizational[2] . To sustain change an organization must face and address each of these areas throughout the innovation. The change process at Bellarmine has been no exception to this rule. Changing to a required diverse certification program was not an easy endeavor. Just as the local school districts struggle with the integration of students with disabilities into the general education setting, this process met head on with several obstacles.

Personal The first obstacle, philosophical differences of faculty on what teachers should know and where their priorities should be (e.g., non disabled or disabled child) mirrors the concern in

[2] Personal - issues affecting the individual such as philosophy, work ethic, beliefs about children; Functional - issues related to roles and responsibilities within the work environment; Instructional - issues related to the delivery of instruction and assessment; Structural - issues related to the format of the organization such as scheduling, work expectations.; and Organizational - issues related to the culture, procedures, and interactions within and outside the school.

K-12 schools concerning who owns responsibility for students in classrooms. One huge question the faculty had to struggle through was why there even had to be a difference in the perception of service for the typical and atypical child. Advocates for the diverse certification program believed that the program would help pre service teachers understand how to serve any child, regardless of the setting. Those on the faculty who were less convinced felt the diverse certification program would set all of the pre service teachers up to only serve students with disabilities in separate settings, thus reducing the number of well qualified general education teachers that Bellarmine produced for the local school districts. An underlying issue, which did not come out until the final stages of the planning, was the deep rooted belief that all children could indeed learn. Throughout discussions regarding content of new courses, importance of different perspectives, and time spent on each topic there was an intellectual and emotional struggle to find common ground.

In the end, the faculty did agree on the philosophical level that every teacher was responsible for every child that enters their classroom and that the program was not going to "promote" teaching in one area or the other (general education or special education). The bottom line was that no one, during the heated discussions the faculty agreed that all teachers needed a broader and yet more refined set of skills for serving students within the general education setting. While some of the faculty who struggled with this concept have since left the organization this issue will continue to require overt attention by the faculty to ensure that the vision and mission of the philosophy does not get lost in the day to day operation of the institution.

Functional One continuing challenge has been figuring out the teaching of the courses. Once the courses were identified, the faculty had to begin the process of modifying and improving the curriculum and the way the courses would be delivered. One big question was "who would teach what, under what circumstances?" This aspect of the change has occurred without much struggle. Each faculty member was given the opportunity to determine which courses and which faculty partnering they would prefer for delivering the courses. In essence, the roles and responsibilities of the faculty have both changed and remained the same. Each faculty has courses which they teach solo and cooperatively.

Instructional The time, energy, and level of planning required to integrate, develop, implement, and assess each phase of change in the coursework has been phenomenal. The process, which is not complete, has required that the faculty representing general education and special education realign the curriculum, instructional strategies, field work, and exit criteria for the program.

Because Bellarmine already had the option of students getting diverse certification the faculty could have simply kept the same programs running. The problem was that the programs were developed and run as separate, not totally related programs, mirroring the dual systems implemented in the public schools. Recognizing that Bellarmine's dual programs were not as effective and efficient as a single service delivery system would be, the faculty agreed to develop an integrated program that held the highest standards for both programs, but promoted them as a single system of knowledge. The initial investment of time required for the integration of the two programs was significant. It took approximately ten weeks of full time intensive work to determine the coursework outlines, field experiences, and procedures for the first year of implementation. Over the past three years the work has continued as each new phase of the integration is developed and refined, with an average of two hours per week devoted to the issues and challenges that arise as courses are integrated, implemented, and refined.

Structural Teaching cooperatively required changing the weighting formula and schedule requirements for faculty. This program requires that faculty teach solo, coteach some courses and satellite in for others, thus altering the face of a "normal" teaching load of twelve hours per semester as formerly required at Bellarmine. Once again the commitment of the university administrators, the dean, and the faculty to the program has made this a relatively simple obstacle to overcome thus far. Valuing the power and professionalism of collaborative work, faculty who coteach in a class that is at full size (twenty five students) each receive full credit for the course. Courses in which the faculty satellite in for a portion of the semester provide partial credit depending upon the degree of work and hours involved.

Organizational One initial problem was the administrative fear that a required diverse certification program would make some potential students shy away from Bellarmine's program. Discussion ensued on the philosophical level as to whether Bellarmine wanted students who did not believe that all children had a right to learn and that teachers had the responsibility to know as much as possible to help them learn. More importantly was the discussion on the practical level about the loss of revenue if this fear was played out in reality. Again, committed to the ideals of professional and ethical responsibility for preparing the most qualified teachers, Bellarmine chose to hold its breath and take the chance of requiring the diverse certification.

Since the fall of 1998 when the program first went in to full operation, Bellarmine's admission numbers have increased from an average freshman class enrollment of twenty four to an average number of sixty students. (125% increase). Over the past three years there has been an average of ten students that change from the education major at the end of their freshman year. Even with this number changing majors, the number remaining still represents a one hundred percent increase from years past. Given this increase, it is explicitly obvious that, thus far, the required dual program has not decreased enrollment.

The other significant organizational challenge faced to this point in the process has been the tracking and coordination of advising and teaching those students who were enrolled in the "old" program and the new program. By contract Bellarmine had committed to providing certain courses to those who were in the old program. This meant figuring out which courses from the old program were still needed and what overlap there was between old and new program courses. In several cases double sessions of courses were needed to provide the old and the new version of the course - one being integrated and one not. For example, the new program integrates two traditionally separate courses, Human Development and Introduction to Special Education, into one year long course called Typical and Atypical Development from Birth to Adolescence. During the implementation of the first two years of the new program, there were students who had taken the Introduction to Special Education but not the Typical Human Development course. This meant that both the integrated course and the old, single course on Human Development had to be offered.

For the first two years transfer students who wanted the single certification in elementary or middle school posed a serious challenge. While Bellarmine did not want to turn away potential students the faculty struggled with allowing a student to come into the program without adhering to the diverse certification philosophy. After weighing the pros and cons of each choice - requiring the diverse certification or not - the faculty determined that for the first two years, anyone coming in with more than their freshman year level coursework completed could finish their certification program as a single certification program. It was agreed that after 2000, any transfer student wishing

to come to Bellarmine must enroll in the diverse certification program. To date, all transfers have been amenable to this requirement.

Overall the challenges to changing the requirements from choice to required diverse certification have, at times seemed mammoth, but in the end they have not been insurmountable. Creating the program required diligence and long term forward thinking. Most importantly, meeting the challenges required the faculty and administration take chances and think out of the old paradigm of delivery. The innovation is not over yet. There are still many aspects of the coursework, skill building, and outcomes that will need to be modified as the first group of required diverse certification pre service teachers hit the schools this year. Long range assessment of their skills and areas of need are in the plan for Bellarmine.

The Content of the Program

Bellarmine has at its core the belief that all teachers should be well versed in the skills of teaching content in the context of processes required for life long learning by children of diverse backgrounds, skills and needs. To that end, there are several pivotal elements of the certification program which invoke quality teachers who meet national, state, and local standards of excellence.

Element One: Expertise in national and state standards for content areas (e.g., math, science) with a firm understanding of how to translate the standards in to practical and effective daily instruction.

Pre service teachers master coursework related to each major content area taught in elementary school and content specific work in the middle school major area. Courses are taught by both School of Education faculty and faculty from the appropriate Arts and Sciences divisions within the University. Students must successfully complete content specific and teaching methodologies for the content coursework to receive certification. A minimum grade of a B- is required for all of these education related courses. All instructional plans developed by pre service teachers have content national and state standards explicitly embedded within the teaching and assessment of the lesson.

Element Two: Mastery of skill and knowledge in identifying, assessing, and planning instruction for typical and atypical child development.

Pre service teachers develop expertise in assessing, planning and instructing students, beginning where they are developmentally and scaffolding their progress through the school curriculum. The first course students take, as freshman, is *A First Look at Teaching: Typical and Atypical Child Development and the Impact on Teaching*. This course is a year long, integrated course taught by two faculty representatives, one from "general" education and one from "special" education. The teachers are not introduced as such, and do not carry any titles related to those archaic programs. The focus is having two teachers with expertise in related areas working together to provide a full picture of what types of children are in today's schools.

During this first course, students study typical and atypical development birth through adolescence both from a pedagogical and real life perspective. Classroom time and field work in local schools combine to help the pre service teacher develop skills in identifying developmental issues and instructional strategies that work. A total of fifty hours of field experience is required over the freshman year for this course, twenty five per semester, with at least two different placements. The

pre service teachers are clustered in schools located in urban settings. Field work begins usually within the first month of school.

Over the course of the year, pre service teachers are required to have placements in both general education classrooms that serve students with disabilities and more traditional special education settings (e.g., resource room, self contained). Pre service teachers are required to work directly with students in these settings in a variety of ways including conducting developmental screenings and providing individual or small group instruction/tutoring.

By the end of their freshman year, pre service teachers have developed a personalized developmental screening toolkit which includes indicators for typical and atypical development in social, language, cognitive, and physical skills. The toolkit addresses the full range of developmental issues from indicators of giftedness to severe mental disabilities. As part of their required skill mastery for moving to the next level in the teacher education program, the pre service teachers must conduct at least three applications of the toolkit within the school setting. The pre service teacher is required to use the toolkit to analyze a "typical" child, a child considered to be "at-risk", and one who is perceived by the teacher or has already been identified as having an educational disability.

By the end of their freshman year, pre service teachers have explored the profession of teaching from multiple perspectives and have seen teachers in action struggling with the day to day aspects of teaching in classrooms with diverse learners. When they leave for the summer they have a very clear idea what roles teachers play in educating students and how wide the range of students can be in any classroom.

Element Three: Experience and skill in working with learners from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

During the four year program, the pre service teachers work for a minimum of 192 hours in local public and private schools, not including a sixteen week student teaching experience. During that time the pre service teacher interacts with students from diverse populations with their faculty. For example, university classes are taught both on campus and on site in elementary and middle schools. The university faculty plan, teach, and assess instruction with school age students while the pre service teachers and the classroom teacher observe, document, and evaluate the teaching. As the semester continues, the pre service teachers take over the instruction with the school aged students and the faculty become the observer and evaluator. This on site exchange serves several purposes. First it allows the pre service teacher to see the faculty in action in the real world, with real students from diverse backgrounds in a variety of school settings from a catholic elementary school to a self contained school for students with behavior and emotional disorders. Second, it allows the faculty to take the pedagogy and bring it to life in the appropriate environment. Third, it allows the pre service teacher to move into the teaching role with scaffolded support from the faculty and the classroom teacher. Fourth, it requires the pre service teacher to adjust teaching techniques for diverse populations.

Over the course of the four years, pre service teachers are placed in urban and suburban settings with about 50% of the pre service teachers also working in rural school settings. Pre service teachers work with a wide range of children from the third largest school district east of the Mississippi to the rural areas of surrounding counties. The county school systems used by Bellarmine serve families whose primary language could be one of 57 other than english with income

well below or above the poverty level. Placements are in public and private institutions allowing the pre service teacher to experience multiple teaching settings. Each pre service teacher is required to have field experience in urban settings in with socioeconomic and cultural diversity. In addition, each pre service teacher completes field work and student teaching experience in general and special education settings.

Element Four: Master the use of multidimensional instruction and assessment

Beginning in their freshman year and continuing through their senior year pre service teachers develop assessment tools that focus on the critical aspects of child development, learning styles, and reading, writing, and math across content areas. Pre service teachers apply these tools in various classrooms, analyze the data, and share recommendations or implement instruction based upon their findings. As mentioned earlier the pre service teacher develops a typical and atypical toolkit during their freshman year which is refined every year after based on experiences and new learning. During their sophomore year the students develop a series of assessments and teaching techniques for teaching art and music as integrated within the general education content, develop a personal teaching philosophy, as well as assess and implement language development strategies for students with and without disabilities.

During junior year, students develop and apply a wide variety of instructional tools. One such tool guides the pre service teacher toward skills for assessing and teaching using Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences. Each student uses the tool to assess an entire classroom in an elementary or middle school, by conducting lessons, gathering data and writing a report with findings and recommendations for the classroom teacher.

In addition, during their third year the students develop tools for reading, language, language arts, writing, spelling, and math. These tools are used in public or private school classrooms to asses children, develop and implement lesson plans, and provide feedback on the instructional levels of the students and suggest ideas for future instruction. Lessons are conducted within general education settings and more traditional special education settings such as the resource room. During the junior year lessons are video taped and analyzed by the student, instructors, and other peers for professional feedback and improvement.

In each tool that the pre service teacher develops there must be an explicit attention paid to diversity in that the teacher must know what is typical and what to do with the child who may not follow that typical path. For example, students develop a language assessment tool that attends to the normal pace of development for phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Within that tool there must also be indicators and specific strategies or techniques that support the student who is not making progress within a normal range. Beyond the issue of normal development, the pre service teacher's tools must reflect understanding of different cultures and background, and use materials that support those aspects of the child's life. For example, in the area of literature, the teachers develop a literature binder complete with culturally diverse reading materials at all ages, high interest low vocabulary reading materials, and techniques to develop the standards for language arts for the gifted reader to the non-reader.

For each lesson plan that the pre service teacher develops and implements the diversity of the learners must be addressed. The pre service teacher must identify the strengths, needs, and interests of the students and connect these things to the content standards and processes for learning. There

must explicit evidence that the lesson has been appropriately tiered to meet the developmental levels of the students in the general classroom. (See Appendix for example.) The pre service teacher is also required to develop individualized lesson plans for the more restrictive environment such as the resource or self contained room, demonstrating how core content is adapted to the unique needs of the child with specific disabilities when they are not served in the general education environment.

As part of the process for learning to develop and implement instruction plans in a variety of settings, the pre service teacher must coplan lessons with other teachers. Planning and implementing lessons with others requires the pre service teacher learn how to work cooperatively with future peers, how to tier an instructional lesson for diverse learners, and how to determine his or her role for service delivery in a coteaching setting. (For an example of a coplanned lesson plan, see Appendix.)

Pre service teachers are also required to take a specific course on assessment which focuses on formal and informal data collection using teacher made, text based, and norm referenced tests. Within that course they develop the skills of (1) designing assessments to match instruction based on core content, (2) conducting valid and reliable assessment, (3) analyzing and applying formal and informal assessments to an individual student, and (4) explore the development of grading systems that represent student knowledge and skill level.

Throughout the years of study, the pre service teacher explores and uses multiple styles of instructional grouping, from individualized and whole group instruction to cross level and ability grouping. As they study and use each type they must demonstrate they understand the purpose, use, and expected outcomes for each type.

Element Five: Apply knowledge of federal and state laws governing services for all students (e.g., ESEA, IDEA, Section 504, ESL).

Pre service teachers study and apply laws and regulations that govern school practices throughout their coursework and within the school setting. Case studies and real life application allow them to investigate various perspectives and outcomes based upon the laws. The pre service teachers study everything from family rights to privacy to discipline procedures and due process for special education services. For example, each pre service teacher assesses a student, provides input for the teacher and attends at least one Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting related to that student. During their student teaching experience the pre service teachers participate in all aspects of the faculty life, taking on the roles and responsibilities of their school based teacher. The pre service teacher attends all professional development, faculty meetings, parent teacher conferences, and transition planning meetings.

The Four Year Perspective.

Given the makeup of today's classroom, teachers minimally need the sound grounding in content areas, a cross categorical understanding of child development, a deep set of experiences with learners from diverse socially, economic, and cultural backgrounds, firm grasp on multidimensional instruction and assessment as well as knowledge of laws and regulations that govern all students. How do we get this compacted into a four year college career?

Each year of study is broken down into clusters. These clusters emphasize particular components of skills, knowledge and procedures necessary to teach in today's classroom. While each cluster may have a particular emphasis, there are common threads woven throughout the tapestry of

this program. Each thread is both explicitly and implicitly built into the content and requirements for each cluster. Those threads which are common throughout are: all children have the capacity to learn, children bring with them diverse backgrounds that serve as their foundation for learning so teachers must use those to enhance the learning, content is the vehicle for life long learning, instruction is based upon reliable and valid assessment, and instruction should begin where each child is and provide tiered experiences for learning.

To complete the program in a four year normal cycle, the pre service teacher must enroll and complete 18 hours of course work seven of the eight semesters. They must earn a B- or better in each education course, a C+ in each requirement from the liberal arts core, and maintain a minimum overall grade point average of 2.5. Before student teaching in the fall of the senior year, they must have completed 192 hours of field work in classrooms from urban and suburban and/or rural settings. Student teaching consists of two consecutive eight week sessions which require successful completion of one week solo performance in both a general education and a special education setting.

During their senior year, the pre service teacher completes a multimedia portfolio which includes exemplars for each of the Kentucky New Teacher Standards, a teaching philosophy, toolkits, and student case studies. In addition, pre service teachers are required to pass four required Praxis tests (10352 Special Education: Application of Core Principles Across Disabilities; ?0371 Special Education: Teaching Students with Behavioral Disorders/Emotional Disturbanc[illegible] 30522/23/24 Principles of Learning & Teaching (k-6/5-9/7-12; and the related general education core such as 10011 Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment).

The years are organized around seven major clusters across four years that are interdependent and build upon each other.

Year One Cluster: A First Look at Teaching. Emphasizes (1) typical and atypical development birth through adolescence including disabilities, gifts and talents, (2) study of the theorists who shaped American education, (3) first hand investigation into the culture of schools, (4) direct work with children in elementary and middle level schools including those with disabilities, (5) math foundations, (6) school health and nutrition, and (7) computers in the classroom. A total of 64 field experience and clinical hours are related to this cluster.

Year Two Clusters: Arts as Education, Foundations of Education, Early Childhood Development with special emphasis on language and literature and the 3 block Literacy Instruction begin during this year. By the end of the year, pre service teachers will have completed 64 field and clinical hours related to these clusters.

Arts as Education emphasizes (1) teaching music and art as integrated components of learning in any classroom, (2) using art and music to support developmental growth, and (3) connecting art and music to children's literacy.

Foundations of Education emphasizes (1) the historical development of American Schools, (2) teaching as a profession, (3) application of the tools of teaching (e.g., lesson plans, management), and (4) laws and regulations that serve as the foundation of services in schools.

Early Childhood Development emphasizes: (1) the needs of children with developmental delays, (2) family impact, (3) community resources, (4) importance of early intervention, and (5) typical and atypical development as an integral aspect of child growth across physical, cognitive, social, and language skills.

Literacy Instruction begins in the second half of this year with a focus on children's literature

including focus on (1) genre's with multicultural perspective, (2) layered literacy (using literature from various reading levels to teach the same focus), (3) quality literature, and (4) literature for teaching across content areas.

Year Three Clusters: Teaching Methodologies, Specialized Education for the Diverse Learner, and the continuation of the Literacy Instruction Cluster are integrated into this year. As with other years, pre service teachers complete 64 hours of field and/or clinical hours related to the clusters. Particular to this year is the increased implementation of instructional lessons and feedback (videotaped, reviewed, and refined) with large and small groups as well as one-on-one interaction.

The Teaching Methodologies Cluster focuses on specific techniques and strategies that work in diverse classrooms from the general education setting to self contained environments. This cluster emphasizes techniques for (1) mathematics, (2) science, (3) social studies, (4) reading, (5) language arts, (6) classroom management, and (7) specialized techniques that work across content areas for students with disabilities as well as gifts and talents.

The Specialized Education for Diverse Learners Cluster emphasizes the characteristics, needs, multiple intelligences, and techniques that work for students with specific instructional needs putting particular emphasis on those identified with specific learning or behavior disorders. This cluster includes (1) the nature and needs of students with learning or behavior disorders, (2) in-depth study and application of Howard Gardner's Eight Multiple Intelligence's to typical and atypical students, (3) assessment of learning and behavior problems, (4) instructional design and implementation of techniques that work for learning and behavior problems in general and special education settings across content areas, and (5) participation in activities that emphasize the laws and procedures for serving students with disabilities (e.g., attending an IEP meeting).

The Literacy Instruction Cluster during junior year emphasizes the teaching of reading and language arts from a critical thinking and communication perspective using developmentally appropriate assessment and instruction. This cluster includes all components of reading from word recognition to reading comprehension, decoding, fluency, reading for learning, multiple viewpoints, as well as construction and reconstruction for meaning. The language arts aspect focuses on teaching and use of spelling, reading, and writing across the curriculum. Pre service teachers develop, implement, and assess instructional lessons for a wide range of students in a variety of settings. The pre service teachers assess individual students for reading skills and develop and implement scaffolded plans for building the student's skill.

Year Four Cluster: Student Teaching and Refinement of Skills, Knowledge, and Procedures are particular to this year. Particular to this year is the long term placement and performance in diverse classrooms to fine tune skills, knowledge, and procedures necessary for teaching in today's classroom.

Pre service teachers begin the first week of August working directly with a Cooperating Teacher (school based general and special education teachers) and Supervising Teacher (Bellarmine School of Education faculty). During the next sixteen weeks the students are based full time in public and private schools for two eight week sessions. One session focuses on teaching in a general education classroom and the other on teaching in a role as a special educator with placements varying from collaborative teachers to self contained classrooms. The pre service teacher is required to successfully complete one solo week of instruction in each of the two placements, attend all professional development and other duties required of the cooperating teacher (e.g., faculty

meetings, parent meetings). One night per week the students attend a curriculum and instruction seminar during which supervising teachers and other professionals work through issues, questions, and problems that arise in their placements.

The final semester of the senior year focused on fine tuning skills, knowledge, and procedures. Pre service teachers participate in coursework that emphasizes building (1) better assessment and grading systems, (2) relationships with other teachers for more collaborative relationships, and (3) multi media portfolios that showcase the culmination of four years of work.

Given the philosophical elements of the program, and the clusters of the four year program Bellarmine strives to ensure that pre service teachers know and act upon the belief that all children have the capacity to learn. Even more critical is the intention that the pre service teachers understand and accept the challenge of being the person who is responsible for seeing that the learning does occur for each child.

How will Bellarmine's program change the dance of education?

Bellarmine's program is by no means a magic fix for problems that plague schools. What it is, however is a starting point where teachers can walk into a classroom as prepared as possible to begin the journey to master level teaching. Pre service teachers successfully develop competencies that include

- knowledge and skills that allows them to teach the child as an individual;
- a sense that every teacher is "special" in that she or he has the knowledge and skills to serve each child;
- the perspective that all teachers share responsibility for each child;
- a belief that all children can learn and each child must;
- knowledge that a single service delivery system where all teachers take responsibility for all children works for children with diverse backgrounds; and
- all children come from diverse backgrounds.

In the long run, with teachers trained to serve all children, the potential for positive change is enormous. In schools and classrooms where every teacher believes it is their responsibility to serve each child the outcomes are unlimited and the problems could fade dramatically.

Common sense suggests that if teachers are better trained to serve diverse learners, the "dark side" of special education would fade. There will be fewer inaccurate referrals, less litigation, better communication with parents, higher levels of student achievement, and with any luck, less paperwork. Teachers who are trained to recognize and address developmental challenges will be more likely to serve those students immediately instead of waiting for the long and tedious process of evaluating students. Teachers who come in to the classroom having had meaningful experiences with children who learn at significantly different paces will be more likely to accept those learning differences and address them within a typical environment.

It is clear from a recent series of interviews and documents chronicling local schools reactions to Bellarmine diverse certification requirement that administrators, principals and cooperating teachers of the public and private schools are enormously supportive of the dually certified pre service teachers. Principals indicate they are more likely to hire a teacher for a general education position if the person has diverse certification than one who comes with single certification in elementary or middle school. Cooperating teachers indicate that the pre service teachers will be better

prepared for the classroom than they were at that point in their career. Administrators, principals, and cooperating teachers indicate that the pre service teachers will be knowledgeable in the laws and regulations that protect students and feel this knowledge will make their teaching life less litigious and smoother.

Pre service teachers through journals, interviews, and group discussions recognize that they have ideas, techniques, and knowledge that allow them to address the multiple needs in any classroom. They indicate that they feel prepared for a general classroom with students who have very diverse needs.

Perhaps one of the greatest outcomes of this required diverse certification programs is that it changes lives. Each freshman class has at least a few non believers, who indicate they are not at all interested in working with children who have disabilities and would prefer to never step foot in a public school. Without fail, these students, by the time student teaching comes along are not only ready to teach students with disabilities but are excited about the opportunity. One student in particular, scheduled to graduate this spring, came in to Bellarmine with the no desire to teach students with disabilities and a preference for teaching only in a Christian school setting, but is now actively seeking a job teaching students with behavior disorders. If the lives of pre service teachers are broadened by this experience one can only hope that someday they will become administrators and parents who believe and promote the same philosophy.

Does every pre service teacher leave the program wanting to specifically be hired in a traditions position teaching in a special education setting? Absolutely not, but each one leaves knowing that they can, and must serve diverse students. The graduating class of 2002 will be the first group of pre service teachers *required* to get the diverse certification. At the time this paper was written, of 32 graduates at the elementary level, approximately two thirds are seeking general education positions and one third seeking special education positions. This ratio is similar to that of graduating classes before the installation of the required diverse certification, so for the first graduating class, the initial concerns of producing "too many" special educators has not played itself out. Pre service teachers are choosing the same types of teaching positions as they were in the past, only this time, those going in to general education are ready for the diverse child and those in special settings are ready for the curriculum and assessment responsibilities of general education.

Closing Thoughts

What should we investigate next? Research in the immediate future should focus on what specific skills teachers need for serving diverse students and how to require those specific skills within a pre service teacher education program across the country. How long would it take to create and implement such teacher education programs? What financial impact would such a requirement have on university or college tuition? What impact would such a requirements have on the number of pre service teachers? What impact would this type of requirement have on** he recruitment and retention of teachers - less burnout, longer careers? Such research would need to investigate the potential barriers that would stop the dance of change. To change the pre service teacher education requirements we will need to change the preparation programs, which means addressing the 5 major areas of change identified by Moll (1996) and mentioned earlier in this paper. It is likely that the first cries of agony from colleges and universities will be related to the time, effort, and complications of reprogramming, when the real barriers will be those underlying issues Senge believes stop innovation - the personal philosophies and organizational roots of the work.

What if education, as a learning organization addressed the deeper roots of the problems that suppress progress? What if the organization focused on the phases of change from a proactive instead of reactive position? How quickly could schools become havens for learning instead of prisons of paperwork? What if education embraces the natural dance of change and stability with open eyes and minds to the changes we know are necessary?

One of the deepest roots of education as an organization is the training of teachers. If teachers were *required* to have training that incorporated the skills and techniques necessary to address the diversity of today's classroom in explicit ways, many of the more surface roots or problems of education would be dramatically reduced or eventually die out.

If education took a proactive perspective and required teachers to be trained with the skills and competencies necessary for serving diverse learners thousands of dollars in professional development, court fees, duplication of services, and even insurance premiums could be saved and turned back into the system for instructional needs.

The speed at which schools can become havens for learning will be dependent upon the expedition of improved teacher certification requirements. With every day that goes by not requiring teachers to be appropriately certified the old, inadequate, and even damaging practices of the dual education system become more entrenched and virtually submissively accepted in schools.

Let us fill the schools of the new milleneum with a new set of educators who believe that they are responsible for the learning of all children. Our dance card should be filled with the best of the best in philosophy, attitude, techniques, and confidence in working with any and every child that walks in the doors of our schools. If we start at the grassroots level, with the main dancers, the classroom teachers, we can dream that they will grow in to master teachers, informed principals, administrators, politicians, and parents who can change the tune, the step, and the rhythm of life long learning for *all.*

What if we created a system where the words *general education* and *special education* do not exist in isolation indicating a separate set of ideals and practices for teaching any child? What if every teacher knows how to serve every child and does so because *they believe in their heart that it is the right thing to do*, not the legal requirement? What if education became an organization where everyone has *skills and abilities that uplift and promote*, in which no one has labels that define or demean - not teachers, not students, not parents? Would it indeed create a world where the *integrity, aptitude, and capacity* of each child and teacher is measured by their *performance in real time* instead of any single test score? Can education electrify life by creating and sustaining an organization where "All Children Can Learn" *MEANS that each child does*?

Teacher Education should be leading the dance.
Fill the dance card!
Someone start the music.
I think I hear them playing my song.

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Presented at 2002 AACTE Annual Meeting, New York

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February 19, 2002

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